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Addendum

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Coordination questions: Report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (item 5 (a))

Annual overview report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination for 1998

1. At its 10th and 11th meetings, on 11 June 1999, the Committee considered the annual overview report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) for 1998 (E/1999/48). The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the report and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the report.

Discussion

2. It was noted that ACC is a critical body for the functioning of the United Nations system and that it had made progress in enhancing coordination within the system during the period under review. The efforts of the Secretary-General to reform ACC and its subsidiary machinery were appreciated. Concern, however, was expressed about proliferation of task forces, working groups, etc. It was explained that these are task and time bound, ending when the defined objective is achieved. It was suggested that Member States should be briefed after each ACC session. It was noted this was being done for the Economic and Social Council and it was indicated this could also be done for the Committee for Programme and Coordination. Reference was made to the opportunity for dialogue which was previously provided by the joint meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination which were discontinued in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996.

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3. A question was raised as to the impact of the appeals and statements issued by ACC. It was noted that these are usually of a nature that do not make measuring results easy or feasible. Insofar as members of ACC were concerned, they remain committed to implementing the decisions of ACC. It was up to the international community to respond to them as well. Efforts were, nevertheless, made to widely disseminate these statements, including bringing them to the attention of relevant intergovernmental bodies.

4. It was stated that ACC should make full use of information and communications technology. Information was provided on steps being taken so as to facilitate effective and timely communication among executive heads and among ACC subsidiary machinery. These include establishing an "extra-net", which will allow the United Nations system staff to communicate electronically, establishing an "Executive Information Network", a dedicated electronic communication for use by the executive heads, improving the ACC Web site, establishing a United Nations system-wide electronic telephone directory, which will also include information on individual's assignment and areas of expertise, and establishing a "United Nations Consortium" to enable sharing of the information resources of the various United Nations libraries. Greater use is also to be made of teleconferencing.

5. It was noted that communication and dialogue between ACC and the Economic and Social Council have improved, but that there is still scope for further enhancement in order to achieve a dynamic interaction between the two bodies. It was stated that the Committee for Programme and Coordination wishes to be informed in greater detail as to how legislative mandates coming from the Council are implemented by the system, and also which of these mandates are found to be impossible to implement and why.

6. A question was raised as to the relationship between the United Nations executive committees and the ACC and its subsidiary machinery. The executive committees are internal to the United Nations itself and incorporate only the departments, funds and programmes of the Organization. They complement the efforts of the Senior Management Group, chaired by the Secretary-General, to ensure coherence and synergies within the United Nations. ACC on the other hand brings together the specialized agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions, as well as the United Nations funds and programmes in order to promote greater cooperation and harmony system-wide.

7. Support was expressed for the priority attention given by ACC to Africa and for ACC's agreement that there should be no lessening of support for African development. Support was also expressed for the Secretary-General's report entitled "The Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa". It was also stressed that ACC should closely follow the ongoing initiatives to address the problems of Africa, such as the United Nations Special Initiative for Africa and the Tokyo International Conference on African Development.

8. Support was also expressed for the conclusions of ACC concerning poverty eradication. In a statement it released on this topic, ACC stressed that poverty eradication — a main underlying theme of recent global conferences — is a key international commitment and a central objective of the United Nations system. ACC's statement on poverty, along with a matrix to guide and facilitate field level coordination, was provided to the resident coordinators for use in the work of the country teams. In addition, the resident coordinators were requested to cite in their annual reports the accomplishments of the United Nations system in helping Governments and other organizations, including civil society, address poverty eradication.

9. The view was expressed that it is important for ACC to deal with the issue of globalization and that ACC should continue to monitor the impact of the financial crisis

and other negative consequences of globalization. The follow-up to the ACC statement on globalization included providing guidelines for resident coordinators and a matrix of activities that could be carried out by the system at the field level. Information was also provided on the follow-up to ACC's designation of the United Nations Environment Programme as the coordinating body for the system's response to the forest fires in Indonesia.

10. The importance of follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits was discussed. It was indicated that ACC should continue to give priority to follow-up to the outcome of these conferences. It was further indicated that there must be adequate resources for financing follow-up actions.

11. Questions were raised about links between ACC and the World Bank and as to whether the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the World Bank's Comprehensive Development Framework are duplicative. It was noted that UNDAFs were originally designed for United Nations funds and programmes, but now involve the full participation of the agencies of the United Nations system as well as the World Bank (General Assembly resolution 53/192, paras. 17–22). UNDAFs provide a programming framework for United Nations system development assistance to countries based on national priorities expressed in national development plans and on country strategy notes. The formulation of an UNDAF is commonly preceded by a Common Country Assessment (CCA). UNDAFs and CCAs are prepared by United Nations country teams, led by resident coordinators, with full participation of the concerned Governments and full ownership of the recipient Governments of the finalized frameworks.

12. It was explained that the Comprehensive Development Frameworks proposed by the World Bank are still in an early stage of development and are intended to be broader in scope than UNDAFs. The Comprehensive Development Framework, as a programming instrument, would encompass all assistance needs of countries, from all potential sources, including bilateral donors. The Comprehensive Development Framework preparation is to be led by the concerned programme country and United Nations system participation in their preparation is expected. Discussions at the senior level are being held between the United Nations system and the World Bank concerning the form of the United Nations system's participation in the Comprehensive Development Framework preparatory process. As to links between ACC and the World Bank, it was noted that the Bank is an active member of ACC, including in the work of its subsidiary machinery.

13. Support was expressed for ACC's having greater contact with civil society and the private sector, but doing so in a manner prescribed by the Charter of the United Nations.

14. It was noted that the strategic framework process is timely and deserves support. In this regard, a view was expressed concerning the need for expeditious development on the part of the United Nations system of approaches and programmes for reconstruction and rehabilitation of the infrastructure of Yugoslavia, which has been destroyed by military attacks. An observation was made concerning the significant economic losses of third States caused by the disruption of commercial navigation on the Danube river as a result of the destruction of the bridges.

15. In considering the report's treatment of Article 50 of the Charter, concerning the impact of sanctions on third-party States, a strong message was conveyed that it is time to move from words to action and to provide the necessary assistance to the affected countries. The important role of the Committee for Programme and Coordination in mobilizing and monitoring the economic assistance efforts by the international community at large, and by the United Nations system in particular, to States confronted with special economic

problems referred to in Article 50 of the Charter, was emphasized. The question was also raised as to whether the report should cover this topic, as it is not dealt with by ACC itself. It was indicated that the report dealt with this subject at the request of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, which could decide on any future arrangement in that regard.

16. With respect to administrative questions, the importance of ensuring safety and security of United Nations staff was stressed and support given for ACC's attention to this issue. It was noted that a number of Member States have contributed to a fund for financing activities related to staff security. Regarding the review of the International Civil Service Commission, it was stated that the General Assembly has not yet acted on the ACC proposal and that, until such time, existing procedures should be followed.

17. ACC's work programme for 1999 was given consideration and received expressions of support.

Conclusions and recommendations

18. The Committee took note of the annual overview report of ACC and noted that the current report was an improvement over those of previous years and that it was more comprehensive, analytical and focused on specific issues. Nevertheless, the Committee recommended that the report be further improved, include more information concerning levels of aid flows and provide detail on follow-up actions taken on past ACC decisions.

19. The Committee indicated its desire that it be informed in greater detail as to how legislative mandates coming from the Economic and Social Council are implemented by the system and also which of these mandates have been found not possible to implement and why.

20. The Committee expressed its support for the priority attention given to Africa by ACC and for ACC's agreement that there should be no lessening of support for African development.

21. Support was also expressed for the conclusions of ACC concerning poverty eradication. The Committee also indicated that it is important for ACC to continue to deal with the issue of globalization and to continue to monitor the impact of the financial crisis and the other negative consequences of globalization.

22. The Committee recommended that ACC continue to give priority to follow-up on the outcomes of United Nations conferences and summits and it indicated that there must be adequate resources to finance follow-up actions.

23. The Committee took note of the overview report's treatment of Article 50 of the Charter concerning the impact of sanctions on third-party States and conveyed a strong message that it is time to move from words to action and to provide the necessary assistance to the affected countries. At the same time, the Committee noted that it needs to be kept informed on any activities and progress in the field.

24. Regarding administrative questions, the Committee expressed its strong support for the attention being given by ACC to ensuring safety and security of United Nations staff and encouraged universal ratification of the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations.

25. The Committee recommended that it should be regularly briefed on the outcomes of ACC meetings.

26. The Committee requested that the next report of ACC include a part related to the implementation of the observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in its report A/52/7 (chapter II, part IV, para. IV.4).